

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Mentorship Rescued: Big Brothers Big Sisters of Big Sky Country Steps In to Support Yellowstone County Youth**

**Bozeman, MT** — In January 2025, after more than 50 years of service, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Yellowstone County announced its immediate closure due to rising operational costs and declining fundraising. Despite serving more than 100 local youth annually, the program was no longer financially sustainable. As operations ceased, local matches were told to “function at their own risk,” and many of those once-thriving mentoring relationships were disbanded.

Now, there’s a lifeline. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Big Sky Country, a 5 county service area which already supports Ennis, Big Sky, Livingston and Bozeman, has stepped in to carry the torch—providing support across Yellowstone County and offering renewed hope for Littles and their families.

“We didn’t want to see those connections lost,” said Kasey Kimball, Board Chair of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Big Sky Country. “So we stepped in. It wasn’t just about picking up a program—it was about showing up for the kids and mentors who were left behind.”

Mentorship is one of the most powerful tools we have to help kids succeed. National studies show that mentored youth are 55% more likely to enroll in college, 78% more likely to volunteer regularly, and significantly more likely to build strong relationships and avoid risky behaviors.

In Billings, where many families are already stretched thin, the loss of this consistent support was deeply felt. Big Sky Country is now actively re-engaging former matches, and making space for anyone ready to get involved. Any previous Big/Little match or interested family that wants to rejoin—or start fresh—is welcome and encouraged to connect.

“Our board saw this as both a responsibility and a rare bridge worth building,” said Kimball. “It’s not often that one community gets the chance to step in and support another in this way. We knew the kids in Yellowstone County deserved consistency, care, and a path forward—and we are committed to walking that path alongside them.”

## A Local Leader on the Front Lines

As important as restoring services in Yellowstone County is ensuring they are guided by local voices. That's why Big Brothers Big Sisters of Big Sky Country has welcomed Whitney Scott, a Billings-based Big Sister and community leader, to its board.

Whitney's appointment ensures that the county is not just being served—it's being represented. Her presence brings invaluable perspective to the organization's leadership and signals a long-term commitment to embedding this work in the community it's meant to uplift.

"When Big Sky Country came in, they didn't just rescue a program—they brought it back to life," said Scott. "Now, it's our job as a community to keep it alive. We need to rally—to help rebuild, reconnect, and invest in the future of Yellowstone County kids and our community at large."

Whitney's addition to the board marks a meaningful step in ensuring our county has a seat at the table moving forward. But sustaining this work will take our community coming together—residents, businesses, mentors—to ensure local kids continue to have the guidance, stability, and encouragement they deserve.

## What the Yellowstone County Community Can Do

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Big Sky Country is calling on Yellowstone County residents, businesses, and organizations to join the effort—by becoming a Big, reactivating a past match, volunteering, or supporting financially through the Coalition for Good monthly donor program.

With as little as \$8.33/month, you can *Become a Matchmaker*—a monthly donor who helps fund the cost of sustaining these one-on-one mentoring relationships and invests in our communities future.

Learn more or sign up here: [bbbs-bigskycountry.org/support/coalition-for-good](https://bbbs-bigskycountry.org/support/coalition-for-good)

**Businesses and organizations** can also play a major role by:

- Becoming corporate sponsors
- Donating in-kind goods or services

This is a second chance for mentorship in Yellowstone County. Let's not miss it.

To get involved, contact: [events@bbbs-bigskycountry.org](mailto:events@bbbs-bigskycountry.org) or call (406) 587-1216.

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**About Big Brothers Big Sisters of Big Sky Country**

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Big Sky Country creates and supports one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth. With decades of impact across Gallatin, Park, Sweet Grass, and Madison Counties—and now Yellowstone—the organization is committed to helping every child in Montana achieve their biggest possible future.